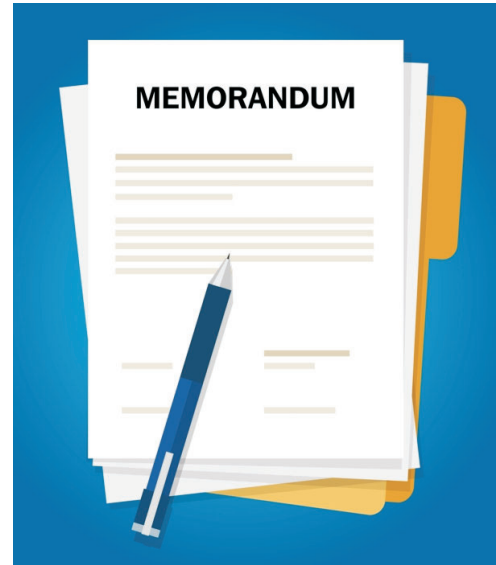


Memos

THESE DAYS, people use Facebook Messenger or Twitter to send a short, quick message to a lot of people. Businesses have used a different method—called memos—for documenting brief messages to a lot of people in the work place. Memos follow specific formatting rules, which you will learn about in this lesson.



Objective:



Explain the purpose of memos and standard formatting rules for writing them.

Key Terms:



addressee
body
date
enclosure notation

interoffice memo
intraoffice memo
memos
memo author

reference initials
subject

Memos: A Brief Communication Method

Businesses use a variety of documents in their activities and operations, including memos. This lesson explains memos and how to format them using standard conventional formatting.

MEMOS: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY ARE USED

Formal definitions of the term memo include the following: a short note designating something to be remembered, especially something to be done or acted upon in the future, reminder; a record or written statement of something; an informal message, especially one sent between two or more employees of the same company, concerning company business. For our definition in this lesson, **memos** refer to internal documents that are purposefully formatted, brief and used to communicate vital information.

Memos are typically hardcopy paper; although digital memos can be formatted and sent as well. With increasing amounts of emails and digital communication, one of the benefits of a paper memo is that it grabs the reader's attention in a different way, gives the readers something to hold in their hands. Memos are used to communicate information to employees; and assure that employees all see the same information. Memos can be used to share news with employees, address a general company problem that has emerged, provide feedback to employees, or help with change management initiatives such as new or modified procedures. Memos are meant to be brief and actually read. Therefore, the information on them is typically important. The assumption is that people will read the memo, especially since it is short and to the point.



FIGURE 1. Memos are used to communicate information to employees; and assure that employees all see the same information.

Intraoffice memos refer to memos sent in the same organizational office or department. For example, the English department chairperson may send a memo to all English teachers concerning a change in textbooks next year. Only the English department teachers would receive the intraoffice memo—"intra" means within. **Interoffice memos** refer to memos sent to many different offices or departments of the organization. For example, the Principal may send a memo to teachers in all departments, Math, Science, English, PE, Sports Clubs, Band concerning a pay raise next year. All of the different offices and teachers would receive the interoffice memo—"inter" means between or among.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: The History of the Memo

The Smithsonian Institution Archives has collected documents that are considered memos dating back to 1849. The paper memo has evolved over time, and in the 21st Century has nearly become obsolete in the wake of the digital age. Explore the history of memos by visiting the Smithsonian Institute Archives where you will find a short video and other historical information about the memo at <https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/evolution-memo> and <https://www.slideshare.net/SIArchives/evolution-of-the-memo>.

HOW TO CREATE A MEMO USING STANDARD FORMATTING

Conventional formatting rules are normally followed when creating a memo. This section explains how to create a memo using standard formatting.

Title

The title is centered at the top and indicates the type of document. In this case, the title would be “Memo” or “Memorandum”.

Heading

The heading is under the title and aligned along the left margin, using 1-inch margins. The headers include the following lines: TO, FROM, DATE, and SUBJECT. The **addressee** is the person or people who are intended to receive the memo; and follows “TO”. The **memo author** is the person who thought of and wrote the memo; and follows “FROM”. The memo author will usually handwrite his or her initials next to the name in the “FROM” area. The **date** shows what day and year the memo was written; and follows “DATE” in the header.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Students

FROM: Teacher

DATE: 1/1/2300

SUBJECT: Memo Formatting Guidelines

This message is to remind all students that memo formatting guidelines have been around for hundreds of years. Memo formatting should follow standard guidelines forevermore.

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FIGURE 2. Conventional formatting rules are normally followed when creating a memo.

Subject articulates what the memo is about; following “SUBJECT” in the header. The subject of a memo can be thought of as similar to the subject of an email.

Body

The body of the memo comes under the heading and is aligned to the left margin, using 1-inch margins. The **body** articulates the purpose of the memo and the main content and information. The body contains the message, content, and purpose of the memo written as clearly and succinctly as possible.

Closing

Reference initials are the initials of the person who typed the memo and created the document. Reference initials are typed into the memo. **Enclosure notation** is included in the closing and calls attention to any further information that may be attached to the memo. If there are enclosures or attachments, write the names of them after the word “Enclosures” at the end. Some memos will include a “cc:” either before or after the enclosure notation if the memo is copied to specific other people but not sent directly to them as information they would need.

Formatting Notes

When formatting a standard memo, remember the following standard rules.

First, set the margins as follows: top 2", Left 1", Right 1", Bottom 1". Second, orientation should be Portrait. Third, write the title using all Caps, MEMORANDUM. Fourth, in the heading section, use all caps for TO, FROM, DATE, and SUBJECT and include a colon after each. Fifth, when typing content after the heading line title colons, use tabs so that perfect alignment will be kept. Sixth, double-space the lines in the heading. Seventh, triple-space after SUBJECT line in heading and the beginning of body. Eighth, when typing the body, use single spacing. Double-space between body paragraphs. Do not indent the body paragraphs. Ninth, triple-space between end of body and the reference initials. Key the reference initial in lower case. Tenth, double-space between the reference initials and enclosure notation if there are any enclosures.

Summary:



Memos refer to internal documents that are purposefully formatted, brief, and used to communicate vital information. For example, memos can be used to share news with employees, address a general company problem that has emerged, provide feedback to employees, or help with change management initiatives such as new or modified procedures. Intraoffice memos refer to memos sent in the same organizational office or department. Interoffice memos refer to memos sent to many different offices or departments of the organization. Memos are created using a few important sections: title, heading, body, and closing. The heading contains four

important lines: TO, FROM, DATE, and SUBJECT. Memos typically contain the handwritten initials of the memo author as well as the lowercase initials of the person typing the memo. Memos can come with attachments or enclosed other information. There are specific formatting guidelines that are followed when creating a standard memo. These guidelines help set the margins, page orientation, and line spacing to remain consistent with other memos.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are the four main sections of a standard memo?
2. Within the heading section, what are the line titles?
3. Explain why memos are typically short and used internally?
4. What is the difference between inter and intra office memos?
5. What are ten formatting guidelines to follow when creating a standard memo?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Memos are supposed to be internal, but sometimes they make it into the public. Research leaked memos and their effects. Start with this web link to a Reuters digital article: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-britain/british-ambassador-to-washington-quits-after-spat-over-leaked-memos-idUSKCN1U519P>. After that, expand your search using the key search terms “memos that were leaked”.

Web Link:



Purposes of Issuing a Memo

<https://work.chron.com/purpose-issuing-memo-9962.html>